



Lieutenant Colonel G. H. HOPKINS

[1861 – 1922]



Colonel Hopkins was President of the Club in 1911

George Herbert Hopkins was born at Tranmere, Cheshire in December 1861. His father was George Hopkins, a cashier and agent born in Liverpool. His mother was Eliza Sophia (née Moyes) [1830-1906]. George was the third of their seven children – all born in England, and all except George, believed to have also died there:

- Sanders [1859-1936]
- Eliza Moyes [b.1860]
- Robert Moyes [1863-1948]
- John Henry [b.1866]
- Emily Wilkinson [b. 1867]
- Frances Alice [b.1868]

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George was tutored at home until he was 10 years of age, and then attended Stafford College, London. After school he enrolled as a medical student at University College Hospital, Gower Street, London where he later acted as House Surgeon. He was afterwards Resident Medical Officer to the Northern Hospital, Liverpool, and surgeon on the RMS *City of Berlin*. In 1888 he was Resident Medical Officer at Swansea Hospital. He then practised at Swansea for eight years; and was surgeon to the Swansea General Hospital; physician and ophthalmic surgeon to the Swansea and South Wales Institute for the Blind; Medical Officer to the Swansea Provident Dispensary; Surgeon Lieutenant, 1st Glamorganshire Volunteer Artillery; and Honorary Secretary to the Swansea Medical Society. His medical qualifications were FRCS, LRCP, FOS ¹.

George married Emily (née Hutton) [1866-1946] in 1892 in Swansea. She was born in Lanark, Scotland and died in Mackay, Queensland. In April 1896, George, Emily, and Donald travelled to Australia and settled in Brisbane.

They had two sons:

- Donald Herbert Odo [1894-1917] ² Born Swansea, Wales, died Ypres, Belgium. A Jackaroo from Clermont.
- Paul William [1896-1965] ³ Born and died in Brisbane. After post-war medical studies in Melbourne, he married Elizabeth Alison (née McIntyre) [1896-1958] in 1925 in Melbourne. He worked a doctor and surgeon in Mackay. They had four children.

The family lived at "Rosemount" North Quay (where his practice was), Clayfield, and "Toomoo", Park Road, Milton.

George conducted a successful medical practice, being known as a competent surgeon, and was appointed Honorary Medical Officer to the Brisbane General Hospital, and Consulting Surgeon to the Lady Bowen Hospital. In the early 1900s he was the Government Analyst. He was also a member of the Queensland Medical Board; and was an active member of the Queensland Branch of the British Medical Association - being its President in 1903.

Throughout his life he exhibited an enthusiasm for military service. At the age of seventeen [1878] he obtained a commission in the York and Lancashire Militia – serving three years as Lieutenant. He retired as a Captain of the militia of that regiment in 1895; and had been attached to the 3rd Battalion, Grenadier Guards.

In 1900 he joined the Queensland Defence Force with the rank of Captain in the Medical Corps, and by 1903 was a Major in Commonwealth Forces AAMC. In 1904 he transferred to the Retired List; but re-activated to command to the 9th Infantry Regiment in 1907 as a Lieutenant Colonel, from which posting he retired in April 1914, with the rank of Colonel. At the outbreak of the World War I he volunteered for the Defence Force but was deemed too old for service overseas.

George was a man of many parts. He was interested in athletics and had played football for University College. He was a keen judge of horses and "... his equipage in earlier days was well known". He was an Alderman of the Town of Hamilton in Brisbane for several years before 1905. In 1901 he and Albert Chivers of Sydney patented "... an improved itinerant machine for cutting and loading cane and similar products".⁴

¹ Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons [1892]; Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians [1890]; Fellow of the Obstetrical Society

² Corporal D.H.O Hopkins AIF 1916-17; 49th Infantry Battalion. Killed in Action, ANZAC Ridge, Ypres. No known grave – commemorated on Menin Gate Memorial.

³ Lieutenant P.W. Hopkins MC, AIF UK and France 1916-19; 49th Infantry Battalion, 4th Australian Machine Gun Battalion. 1941-46 Lieutenant Colonel, 19 Australian Field Ambulance, Merauke and Bougainville. Mentioned in Despatches.

⁴ Application for Letters Patent #11,462 of 23 October 1901 at Sydney Patents Office.

During his presidency of the Club in early 1912 there was a general strike in Brisbane – involving 20,000 workers and the police. The Police Commissioner responded by swearing in special foot and mounted constables. He was inundated with volunteers and 3,000 were sworn in, including a large number of retired military and naval officers and all of these not already members were made honorary members of the Club (or “Institution” as it then was) for ‘the duration’.

All commodities were soon in short supply but the Honorary Secretary had a permit from the Police Commissioner which gave priority in the purchase of food and drink - and the Club became one of the few places in town where a hard working special constable could quench his thirst or find a meal. It is recorded that this circumstance had a very beneficial effect on the trading results for the month. The Club also had the benefit of motor cars provided by the Police Commissioner for the transport of its needs. The President (Lieutenant Colonel Hopkins) lived a few doors away in North Quay and provided sleeping accommodation for about twenty members every night during the emergency

Colonel Hopkins died in Brisbane on 6 January 1922.

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents
- AWM, NAA & DVA Archives
- Trove